MARVEL COMICS
4 OF 4
PUNISHER
P.O.W.
WRIGHTSON 90
STARLIN • WRIGHTSON • WRAY

PUNISHER® POV™
POINT OF VIEW

BOOK FOUR: HINDSIGHT

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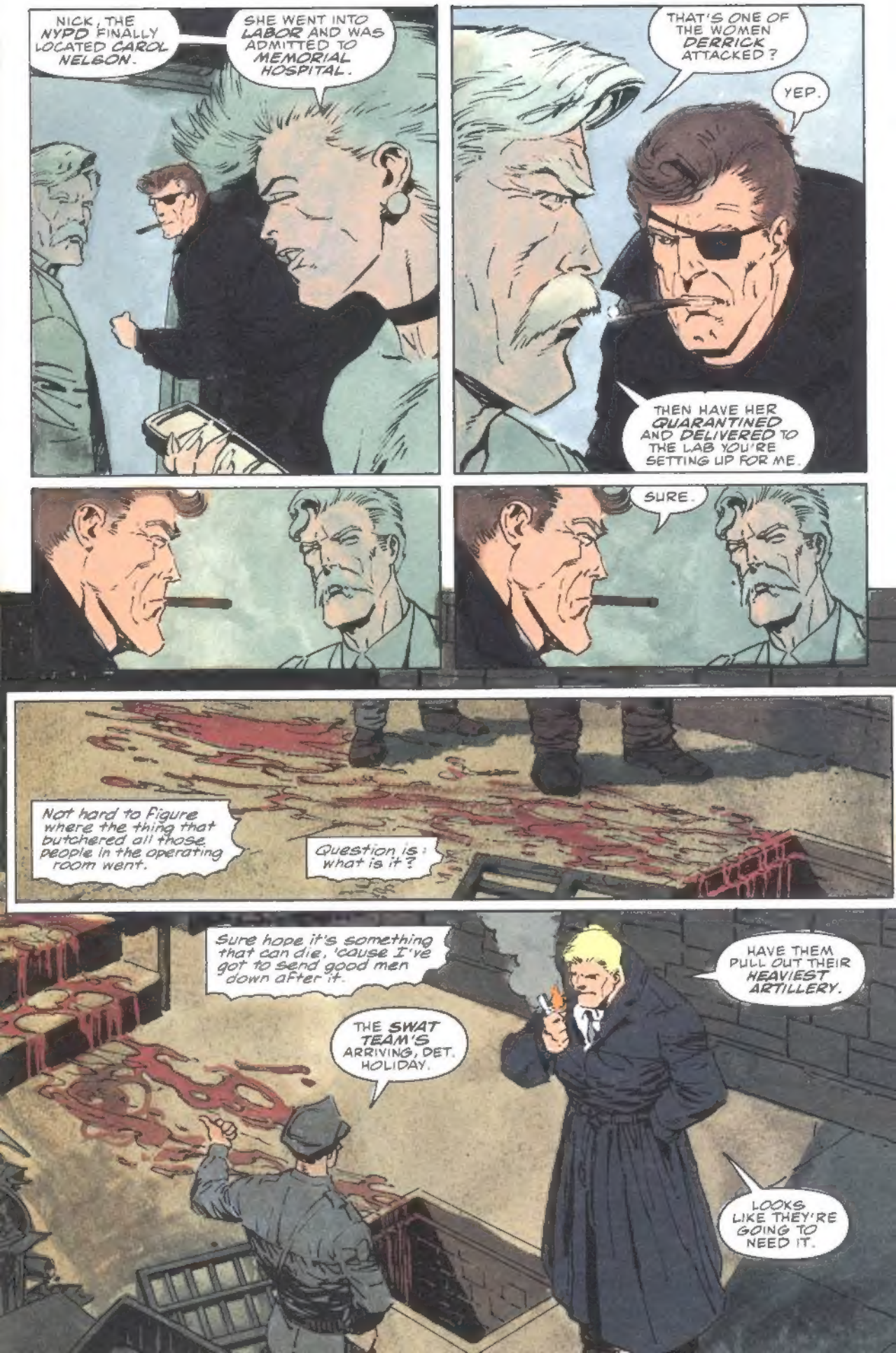
SPECIAL THANKS TO RUBEN DIAZ & GREGORY WRIGHT

COVER LOGO BY KEN LOPEZ

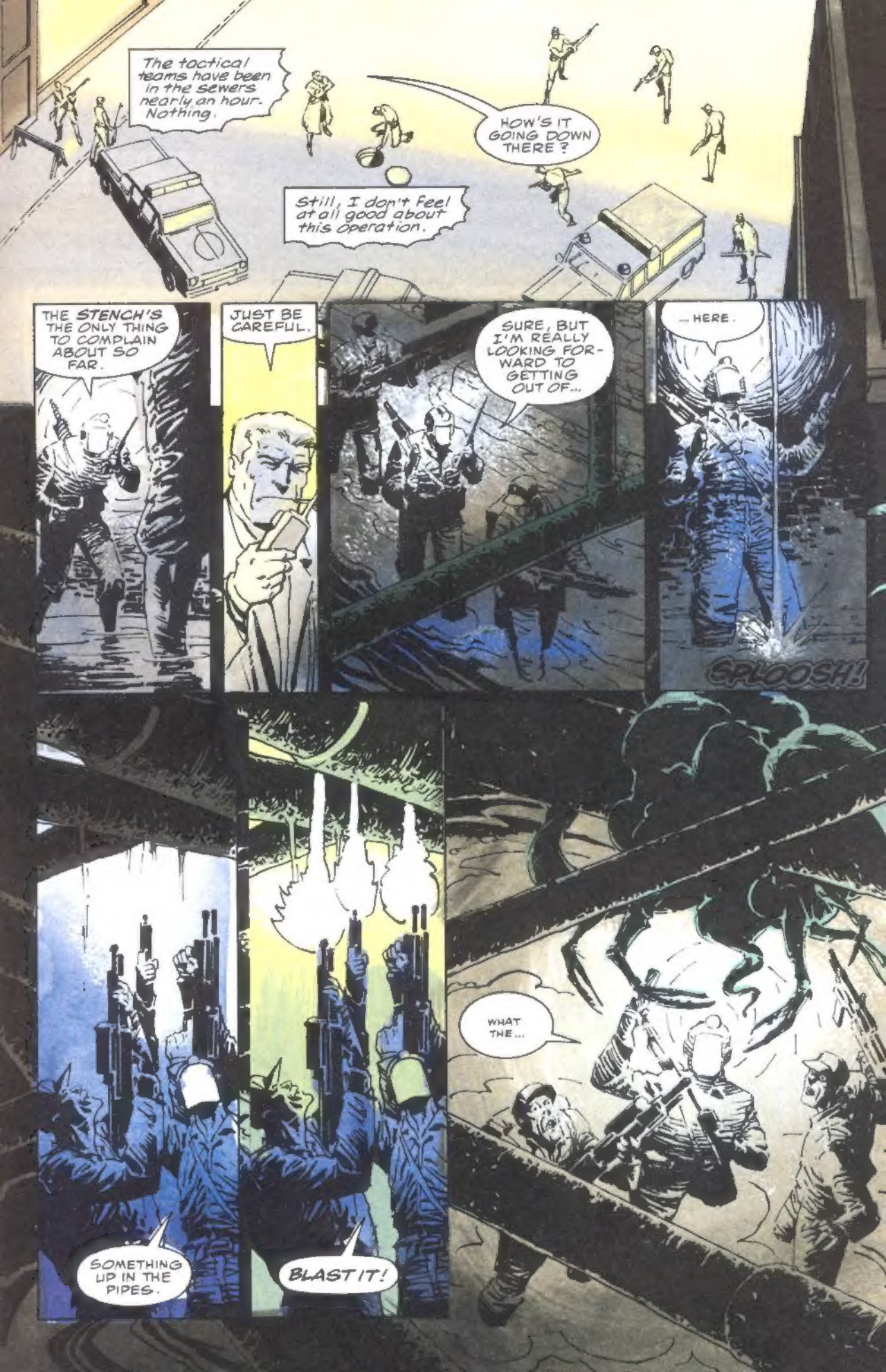
brak ocd

By the time we finish cleaning up at Wainscroft's summer home the sun's rising.
It's been a long night.
I watch the slick, carrying off the Punisher, with a sort of perverse sense of satisfaction.
It's another SHIELD operation that came off smooth as silk.

The afternoon papers will carry the story of how the Vampire Killer was gunned down while resisting arrest.
There won't be any articles on a government funded research project going haywire.
Nor any mention of the Punisher.
WHAT'S THE WORD ON YOUR BOY, WAINS-CROFT?
NOT GOOD, COL. FURY.
NOT GOOD AT ALL.
It'll all be nice and tidy, unlike Deke Wainscroft, our berserk super-soldier.
IT APPEARS THE BRAIN IS THE ACHILLES HEEL IN OUR LITTLE PROJECT.
SOMEHOW, THE PUNISHER DISCOVERED THIS.
THE BEATING HE GAVE POOR DERRICK SEEMS TO HAVE SERIOUSLY IMPAIRED ADVANCED CORTEX FUNCTION.
MADE A VEGE OF HIM?
BASICALLY.
IS IT PERMANENT?
MOST LIKELY. BUT IN-DEPTH STUDIES OF HIS PHYSIOLOGY WILL STILL PROVE USEFUL.
Brain damage, eh?
You'd be tickled pink to hear that, wouldn't you, Castle?
Ol' Deke won't be doing any more killing.


NICK, THE NYPD FINALLY LOCATED CAROL NELSON.
SHE WENT INTO LABOR AND WAS ADMITTED TO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.
THAT'S ONE OF THE WOMEN DERRICK ATTACKED?
YEP.
THEN HAVE HER QUARANTINED AND DELIVERED TO THE LAB YOU'RE SETTING UP FOR ME.
SURE.
Not hard to figure where the thing that butchered all those people in the operating room went.
Question is: what is it?
Sure hope it's something that can die, 'cause I've got to send good men down after it.
HAVE THEM PULL OUT THEIR HEAVIEST ARTILLERY.
THE SWAT TEAM'S ARRIVING, DET. HOLIDAY.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO NEED IT.

The slick makes great time down the Hudson, its blades chopping out an incessant message in my head.
"You blew it. You blew it. You blew it."
Things couldn't have gone worse.
Deke's still breathing and his father, the true architect of all this death and destruction, gets a free ticket to ride.
Looks like the bad guys win this round.
WHAT'S WRONG, TOUGH GUY?
GOT NOTHING TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE SOME YOUNG BUCK AT RYKERS A TERRIFIC MAIN SQUEEZE.
Worse still, I feel like I'm missing something important.
Something fairly obvious.
Been keeping tabs on all the players, both major and minor, so I should be able to scratch this itch.
Something's also bothering me about that dream I had.
The one with my kids in it.
The kids! That's it.
The Nelson woman.


The tactical teams have been in the sewers nearly an hour. Nothing.
HOW'S IT GOING DOWN THERE?
Still, I don't feel at all good about this operation.
THE STENCH'S THE ONLY THING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT SO FAR.
JUST BE CAREFUL.
SURE, BUT I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING OUT OF...
... HERE.
SPLOOSH!
SOMETHING UP IN THE PIPES.
BLAST IT!
WHAT THE...

Up until the day I die, I'll never forget the sounds that come up from those sewers.
The shrieks of good men dying horribly.
We're on our way back to the heli-carrier when Nina gets the word from the NYPD.
CAROL NELSON IS DEAD.
AND THE REPORTS HAVE IT THAT SHE WAS KILLED BY SOME KIND OF MONSTER RUNNING LOOSE BY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.
THE NYPD AFTER THIS CRITTER?
YES, AND THEY'VE LOST EIGHT MEN WHILE TRACKING IT THROUGH THE SEWER SYSTEM.
SOUNDS BAD.
THEN TELL THEM TO BACK OFF; SHIELD'S TAKING OVER.
CONTACT DUNCAN ON THE HELI-CARRIER.
I WANT A FULLY ARMED SHIELD TACTICAL SQUAD WAITING FOR US WHEN WE REACH NEW YORK CITY.

Have to reach Carol Nelson; warn her that she might be infected by whatever it is that turned Deke into a monster.
Her unborn baby might be in danger also.
Luckily we're nearing New York.
NOT SO TOUGH WITHOUT ALL THOSE FANCY GUNS OF YOURS, ARE YOU ?
I'M TALKING TO YOU, BOY!
I'LL BE LEAVING NOW.
WHAT THE HELL YOU TALKING ABOUT, BOY ?
YOU GONE CRAZY OR SOMETHING?

WHAT THE DEUCE IS GOING ON BACK THERE?!

Time to say good bye
I appreciate the lift to town

Must still be three, four hundred feet above the deck.

Falling the way I am, it's going to be mighty painful hitting that water.
Only way to keep from breaking my neck is getting my hands up around front to make a decent dive of it

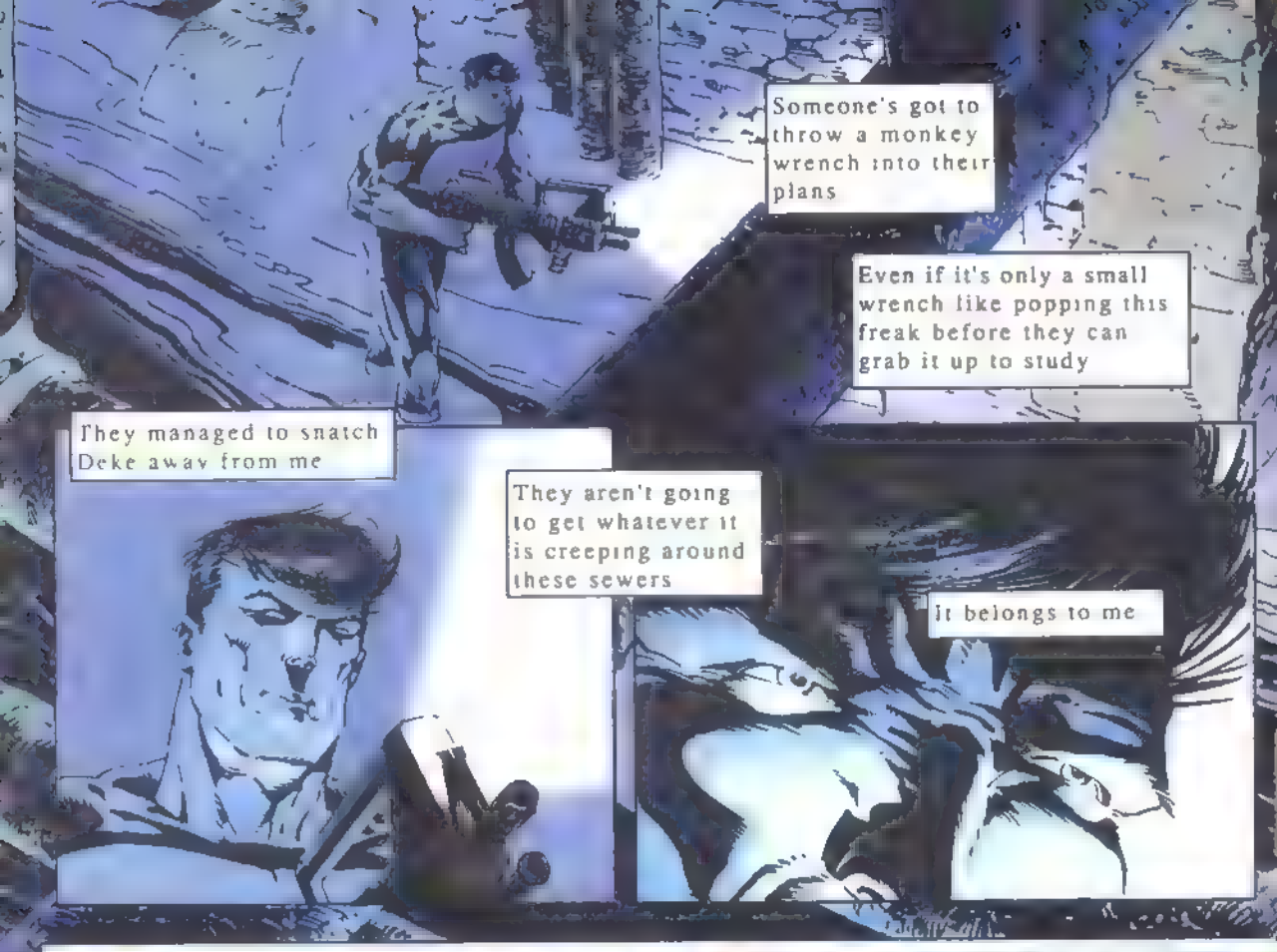
Fortunately it's a move I've practiced up on, even if it wasn't under such dramatic circumstances.

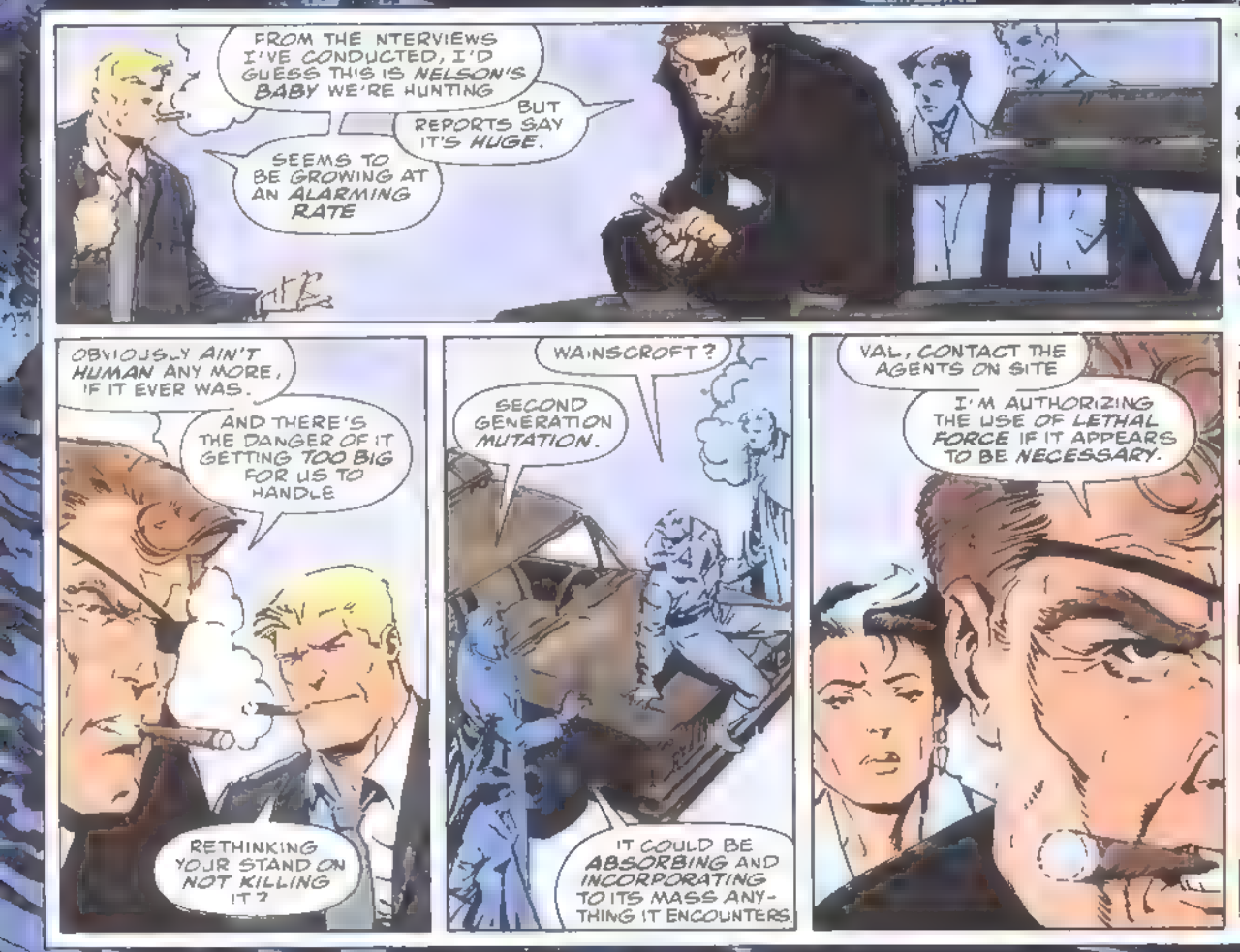
The dive wouldn't win me any Olympic medals but I do manage to enter the Hudson without making a shattered pretzel out of my backbone
Trouble is, I end up going down a lot farther than I planned
Lungs near to bursting by the time I make it back to the surface

It's a tough swim over to the New Jersey side of the river
Use a sort of a three-legged dog paddle.
Running on empty by the time I reach the warehouse district
Lucky to find a phone to call Microchip for a lift.
Been in the sewurs before, but this time its different
Never seen it so quiet so lifeless. Nothin movin around down here
Whats happened to all the water bugs and rats? Somethin eat them?
But don't matter none Come down here to do a job and I'm gonna do it
The horror from the hospitel is lurking around here and i'm gonna kill it
That's what us monster hunters do

Not overjoyed at SHIELD taking over the show, but strangely relieved, somewhat
FURY, WHAT'S ALL THIS STUFF YOUR FOLKS RE TAKING INTO THE SEWERS?
H-TECH HUNTING GEAR
NET AND ELECTRICAL STUN GUNS, GAS GRENADES SONIC MOTION DETECTORS
NONE OF THAT SOUNDS VERY LETHAL.
NONE OF IT, S.
WE WANT TO TAKE THIS SUCKER ALIVE.
WHAT GOES ON HERE? THAT THING KILLED EIGHT OF MY BEST MEN!
DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE
THE CRITTER'S GOVERNMENT PROPERTY AS OF NOW
Takes Microchip a half hour to find me
'BOUT TIME YOU GOT HERE
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU TOO, FRANK
MY BUT AREN'T WE LOOKING ESPECIALLY LIKE HELL TODAY?
WHAT'D YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE NELSON DAME?

JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT HER
WAS?
I hear shot and screems!
Find 2 more dead cops
This monster must be a tuff one
But it won't excape Chester GOUDA, the monster hunter
It has to have gone down this way
I THINK THIS IS A BIG MISTAKE, FRANK
YOU'RE NOT PHYSICALLY UP TO THIS, AND YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE RIGHT GEAR FOR THE JOB
I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO
Wainscroft is creating monsters to be the super-soldiers of the future and Fury's helping him
It isn't right

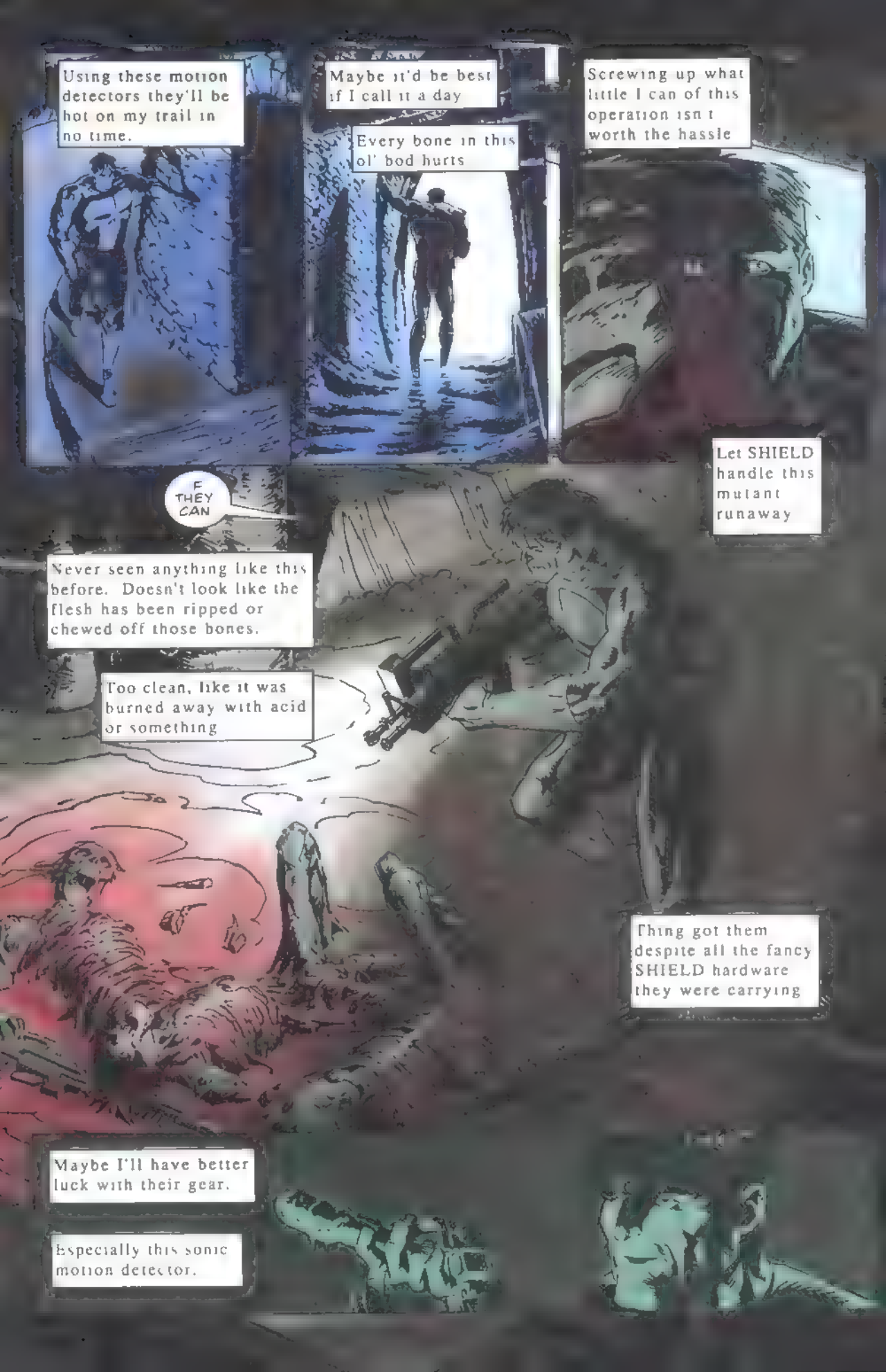

Someone's got to throw a monkey wrench into their plans
Even if it's only a small wrench like popping this freak before they can grab it up to study
They managed to snatch Deke away from me
They aren't going to get whatever it is creeping around these sewers
It belongs to me


FROM THE NTERVIEWS I'VE CONDUCTED, I'D GUESS THIS IS NELSON'S BABY WE'RE HUNTING
BUT REPORTS SAY IT'S HUGE.
SEEMS TO BE GROWING AT AN ALARMING RATE
OBVIOUSLY AIN'T HUMAN ANY MORE, IF IT EVER WAS.
AND THERE'S THE DANGER OF IT GETTING TOO BIG FOR US TO HANDLE
RETHINKING YOUR STAND ON NOT KILLING IT?
WAINSCROFT?
SECOND GENERATION MUTATION.
IT COULD BE ABSORBING AND INCORPORATING TO ITS MASS ANY-THING IT ENCOUNTERS
VAL, CONTACT THE AGENTS ON SITE
I'M AUTHORIZING THE USE OF LETHAL FORCE IF IT APPEARS TO BE NECESSARY.

Maybe Microchip was right about this being a lame idea
I'm not even sure where I'm going
Letting my ego run the show
That's a sure fire way to get yourself
SHIELD agents!
Best to put some distance between them and me
FREEZE!
That ought to do the trick
WHAT THE ?!

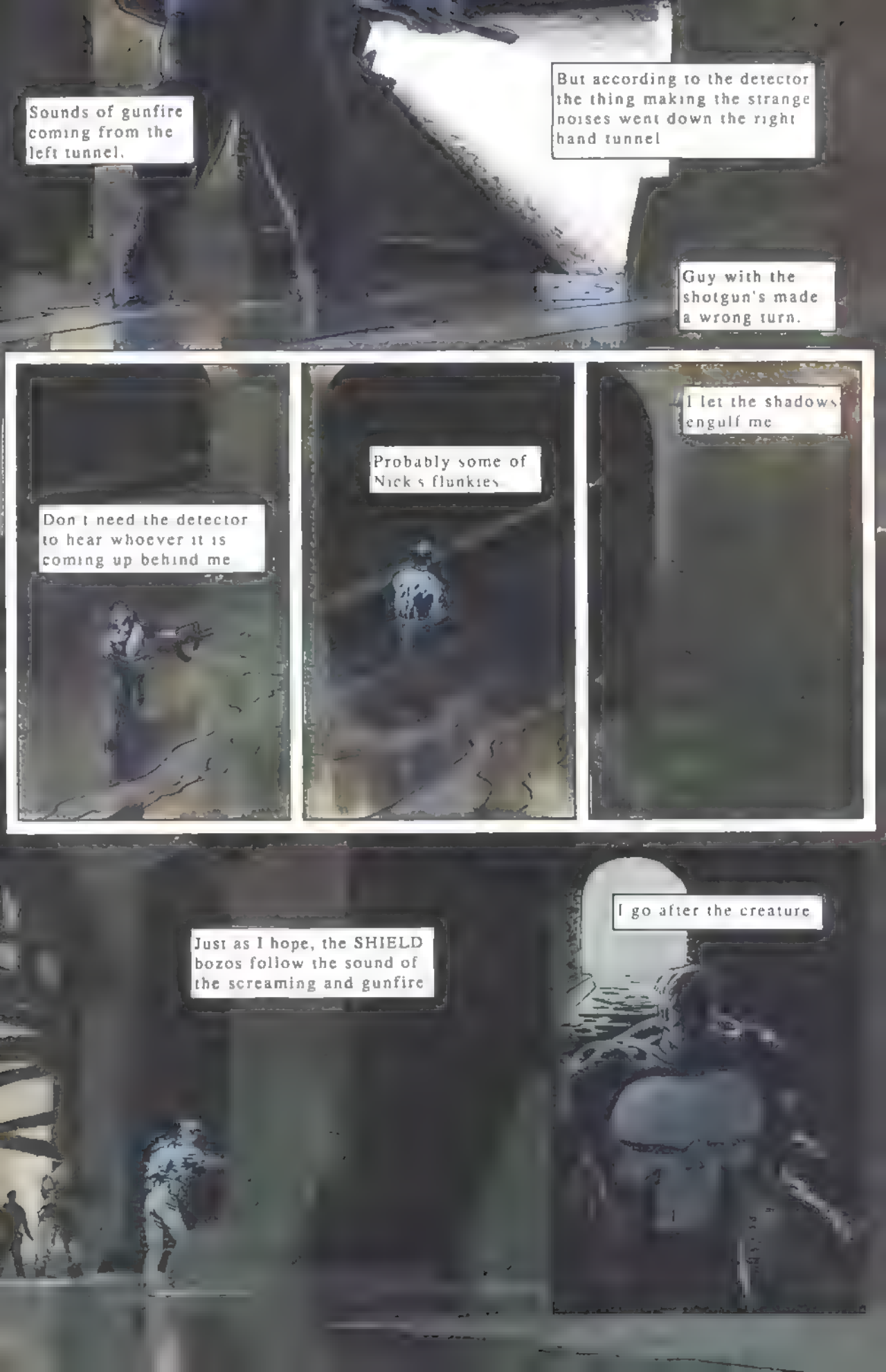
They must have some kind of sonic tracking device
Don't want to get tied up in a useless fire fight with these bozos
Just have to take a route their detectors can't trace
This canal ought to do the trick
Just don t think about what it is you re jumping into, Castle
and you ll be okay
Sort of

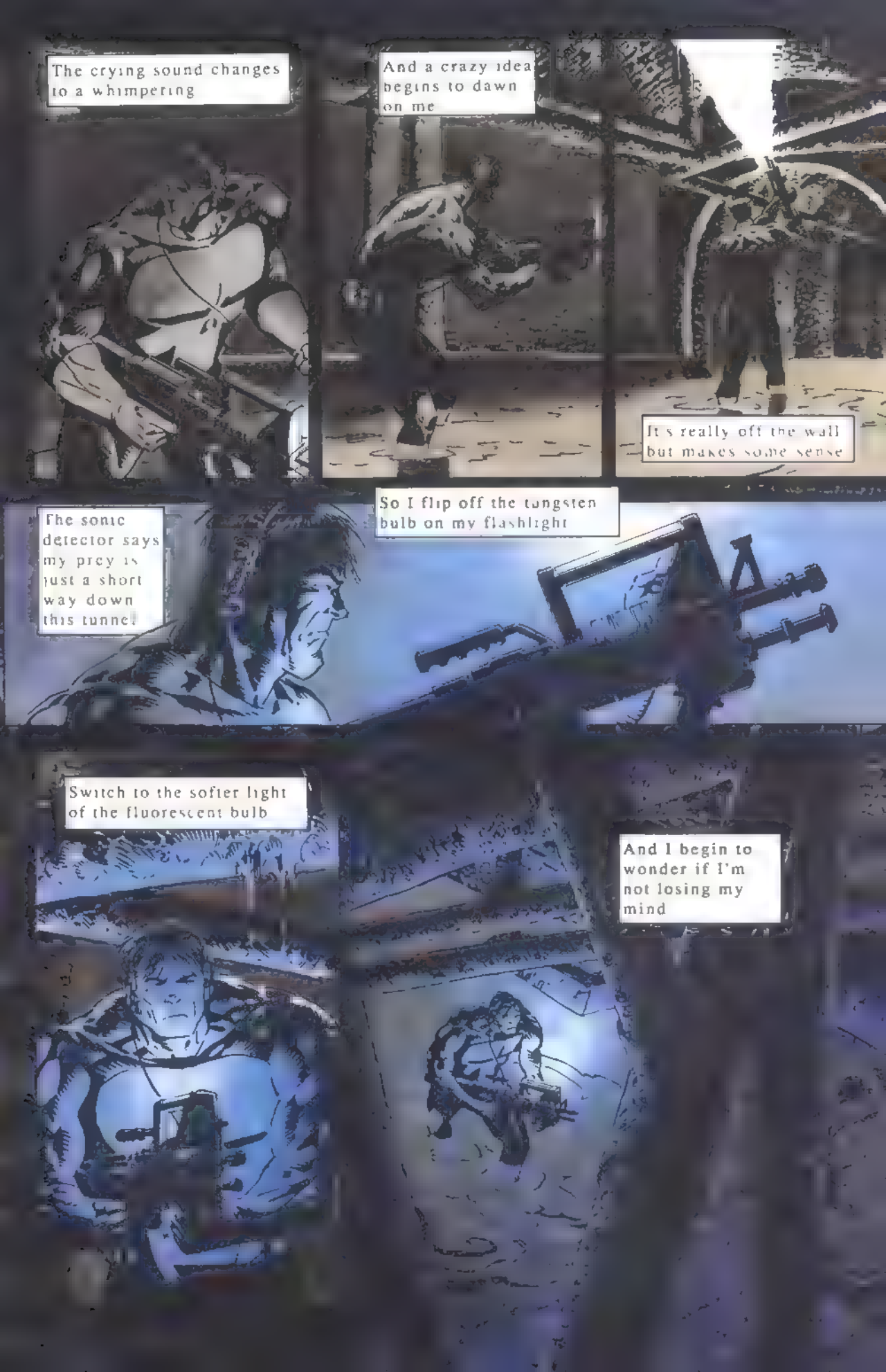
FURY, WE GOT A NEW PROBLEM DOWN HERE
THE PUNISHER.
TERRIFIC.
TRY TO GET HIM OUT OF THE PICTURE WITHOUT KILLING HIM, IF YOU CAN
WILL DO
NOT AUTHORIZING THE USE OF LETHAL FORCE AGAINST THE PUN SHER IS A BIG MISTAKE.
MY CALL.
ONE YOUR SUPERIORS WILL PROBABLY DISAGREE W TH, ONCE THEY HEAR OF IT
My superiors?
THEY MIGHT
Smell like a septic tank but I did manage to shake Fury's boys
But for how long


Using these motion detectors they'll be hot on my trail in no time.
Maybe it'd be best if I call it a day
Every bone in this ol' bod hurts
Screwing up what little I can of this operation isn't worth the hassle
Let SHIELD handle this mutant runaway
F THEY CAN
Never seen anything like this before. Doesn't look like the flesh has been ripped or chewed off those bones.
Too clean, like it was burned away with acid or something
Thing got them despite all the fancy SHIELD hardware they were carrying
Maybe I'll have better luck with their gear.
Especially this sonic motion detector.

Right off the bat the thing proves useful
Someone wandering around a tunnel to my right
And there's something not too far in front of him
Making a weird noise as it goes
Something almost like a baby crying
the monsters tryin to make me think its somethin it ain't.
But i ain't about to be fooled
I reconize the stench of the devel when i smells it.
God wants all these fou demens destroyed I know
Thats why he gave me the ca lin. They a l gotta die
Thing musta gone down th s here s de tunn .

The devel spawn takes me by surprize!
But thats okay I can handel it
Lets see how this demon likes ACID/ HOLY WATER BOMBS!
The scream nearly ruptures my eardrums
It sounds like someone getting a premature taste of hell
IT CAME FROM THIS WAY!
I'M GETTING MULTIPLE READINGS ON THE DETECTOR!
COME BACK, YOU SLIMY HORROR!
Sounds like some one with a shotgun
Who?
THERE'S NO ESCAPING THIS MONSTER HUNTER!


Sounds of gunfire coming from the left tunnel.
But according to the detector the thing making the strange noises went down the right hand tunnel
Guy with the shotgun's made a wrong turn.
Don t need the detector to hear whoever it is coming up behind me
Probably some of Nick s flunkies
I let the shadows engulf me
Just as I hope, the SHIELD bozos follow the sound of the screaming and gunfire
I go after the creature


The crying sound changes to a whimpering
And a crazy idea begins to dawn on me
It's really off the wall but makes some sense
The sonic detector says my prey is just a short way down this tunnel
So I flip off the tungsten bulb on my flashlight
Switch to the softer light of the fluorescent bulb
And I begin to wonder if I'm not losing my mind

A baby?
Genetically altered and then forced through the terrors of birth?
A baby?
Mistaken for a monster and hunted as such from its first moments of life?
A baby?
Seeking and finding nutrition from the only source available to it; the strange creatures stalking it?
A baby?
Wainscroft's formula was supposed to allow an organism to adapt to it s surrounding by taking on aspects of it
MY GOD, NO!

A baby
Has to be Carol Nelson's kid

Beneath all the terror and inhumane genetic tailoring .
A poor frightened child
Another twisted gift from the mind of Daemian Wainscroft
For this too I will someday make him pay
Terrible murders. But the poor thing really didn't know what it was doing
Living in fear, doing whatever it needed to do to stay alive
I can understand that. I've been there myself.
But that doesn't change anything. The question still remains
What do I do with you, baby?
Maybe the kindest choice is to just up and put you out of your misery?

It's been a long time since I trusted anyone other than myself.
Maybe it's time I gave it another shot
No, can't do it.
I'm not that far gone.
DEAR JESUS
WHATEVER AM I GO NG TO DO W TH YOL ?

There are fleeting seconds of infinite horror etched into my memory. This moment is one of them
The unexpected explosion of the shotgun going off behind me
The sight of that sorry creature taking a load of dimes.
The blood
Dimes!
Fatso's the creep that's been offing those women Deke attacked!
The demon spawn is on its way back to hell!
Praise the Lord!

Innocence dies amidst the filth
And something deep within me dies with it.
The world turns into a crimson nightmare
And in this dream I am the most frightening of all monsters
The devel sends another creeture for me to slay!
Deer God guide my aim!

My body armor takes most of the load
The tons o fun decides to finish me with my own piece
No way!
The monster moves ke lightning!
But . Fite on the s de of the angels!
No devel can stand aga nst me!
Lots of muscle under all that lard
Got to finish him off quick before I run out of steam

Tubby catches me with a lucky blow to my injured shoulder
The world explodes inside my head.
This monsters faster and tuffer than any of the others!
God has sent me a real challenge this time!
Whatever it takes; finish the sicko off!
I will not fail him!
I will crush this evel demen!
He falls on me like a crumbling skyscraper

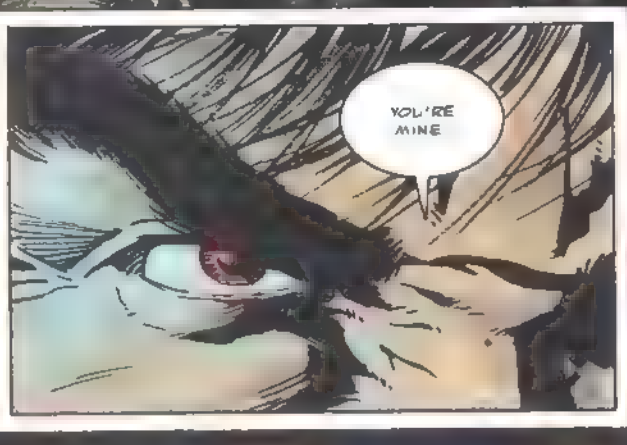
The monsters w ll not prevale !
I'll kill them al. !
Down
For the women
Now to finish him.
Let's see if I can cut through all that fat and find myself a major artery.
GOTCHA, MONSTER !

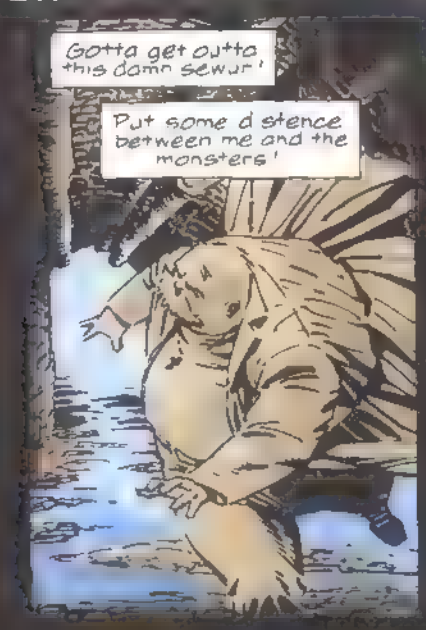
Everything's nothing but a blinding white flash
You blown it, demon monster!
Return to the Fiery Hades from where you came!
ACCCKK!

SCRRE EEEEEEEEEEEEEE
Can t let him get away
This one is to tuFF For me!
Won't die!

Gotta run fer it!
Get on your feet damn you
Get after that scumbag!
Wait! That sound!
Whimpering.
Baby's still alive
But not for much longer.
So much blood.
Don't worry, baby
Daddy's not going to leave you!
He'll stay with you
Stay with you until the end.

Fatso .
there's no place on this God given Earth big enough to hide you

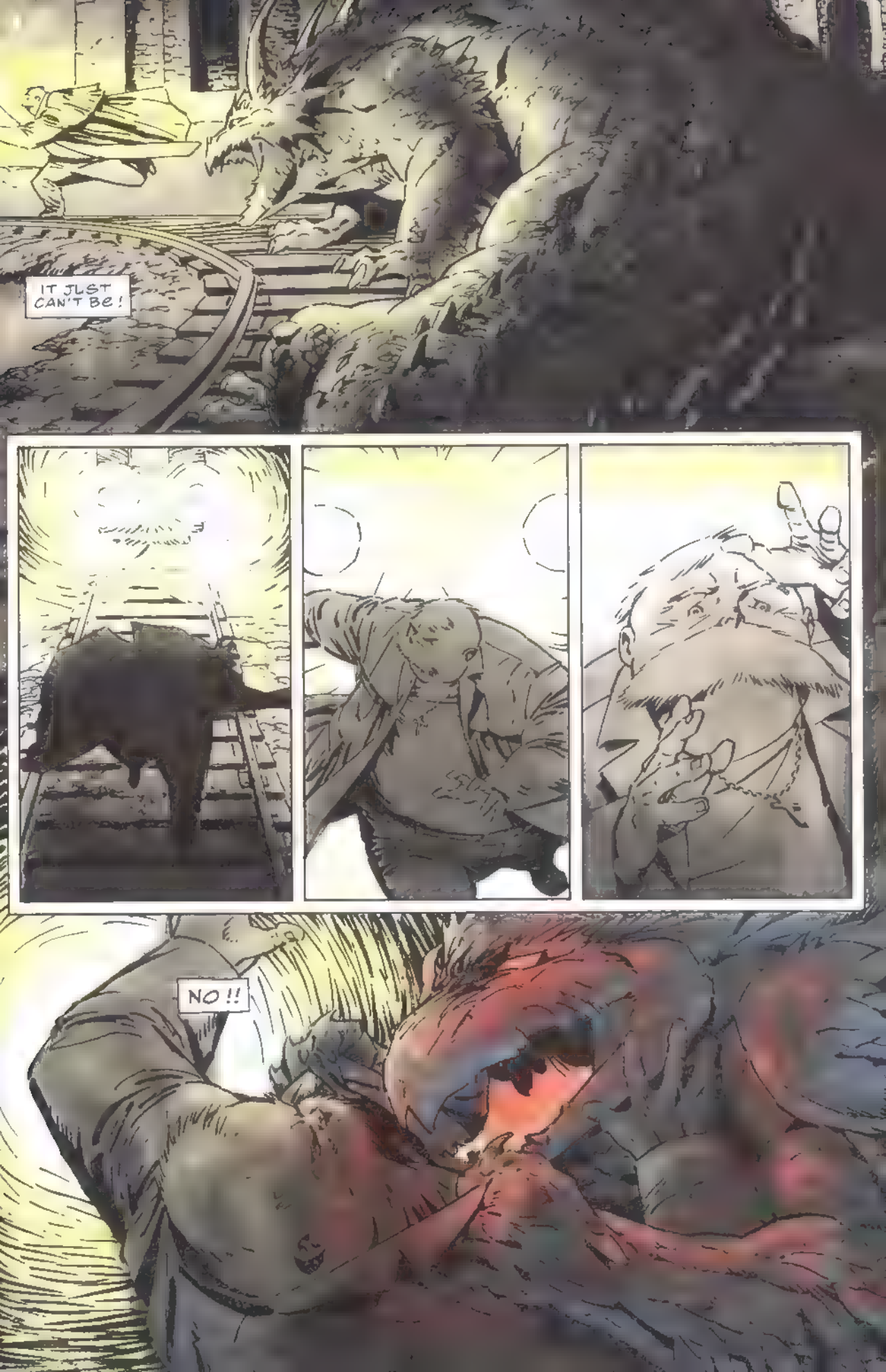

YOU'RE MINE

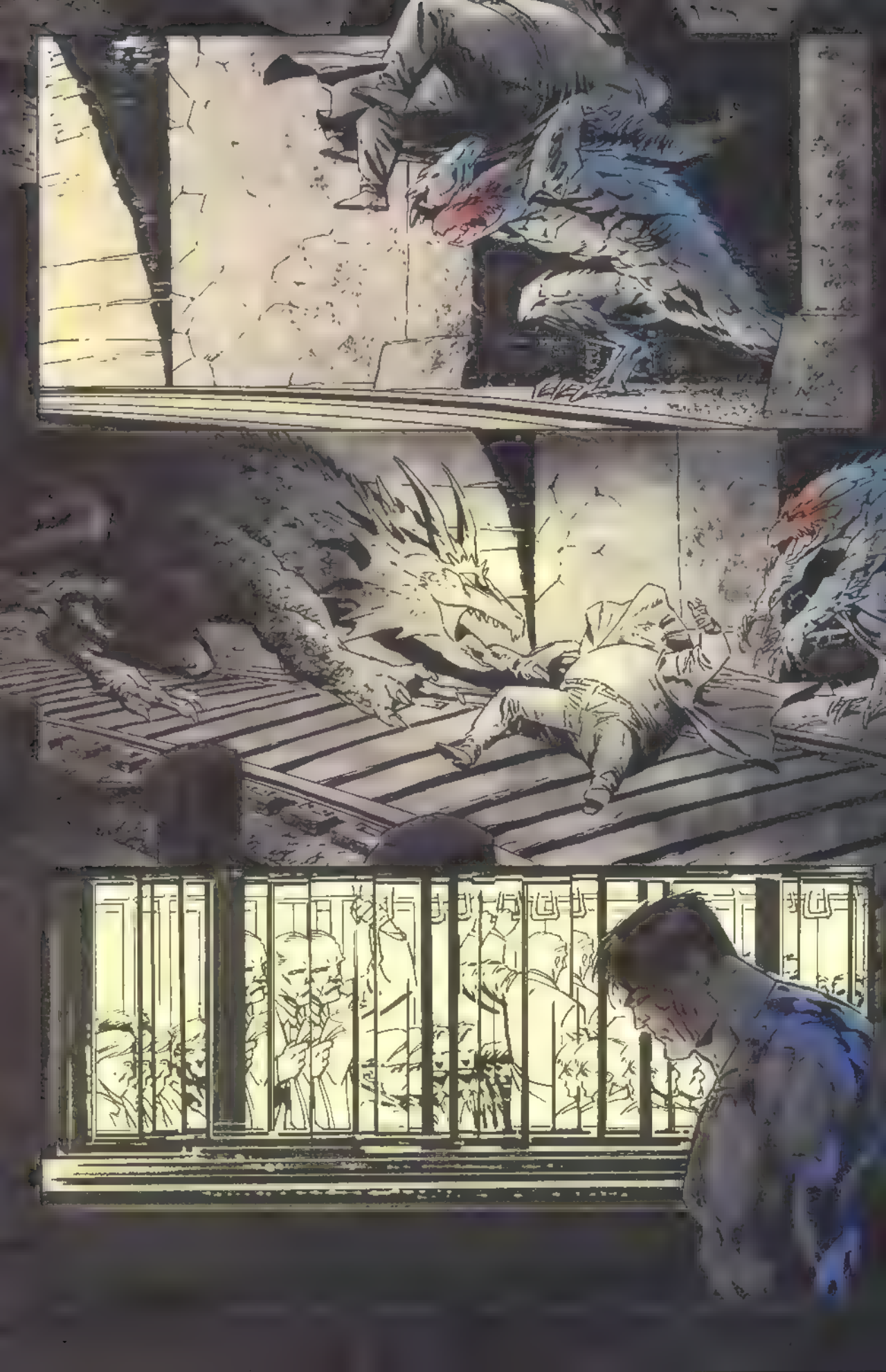

Gotta get outta this damn sewer!
Put some distence between me and the monsters!

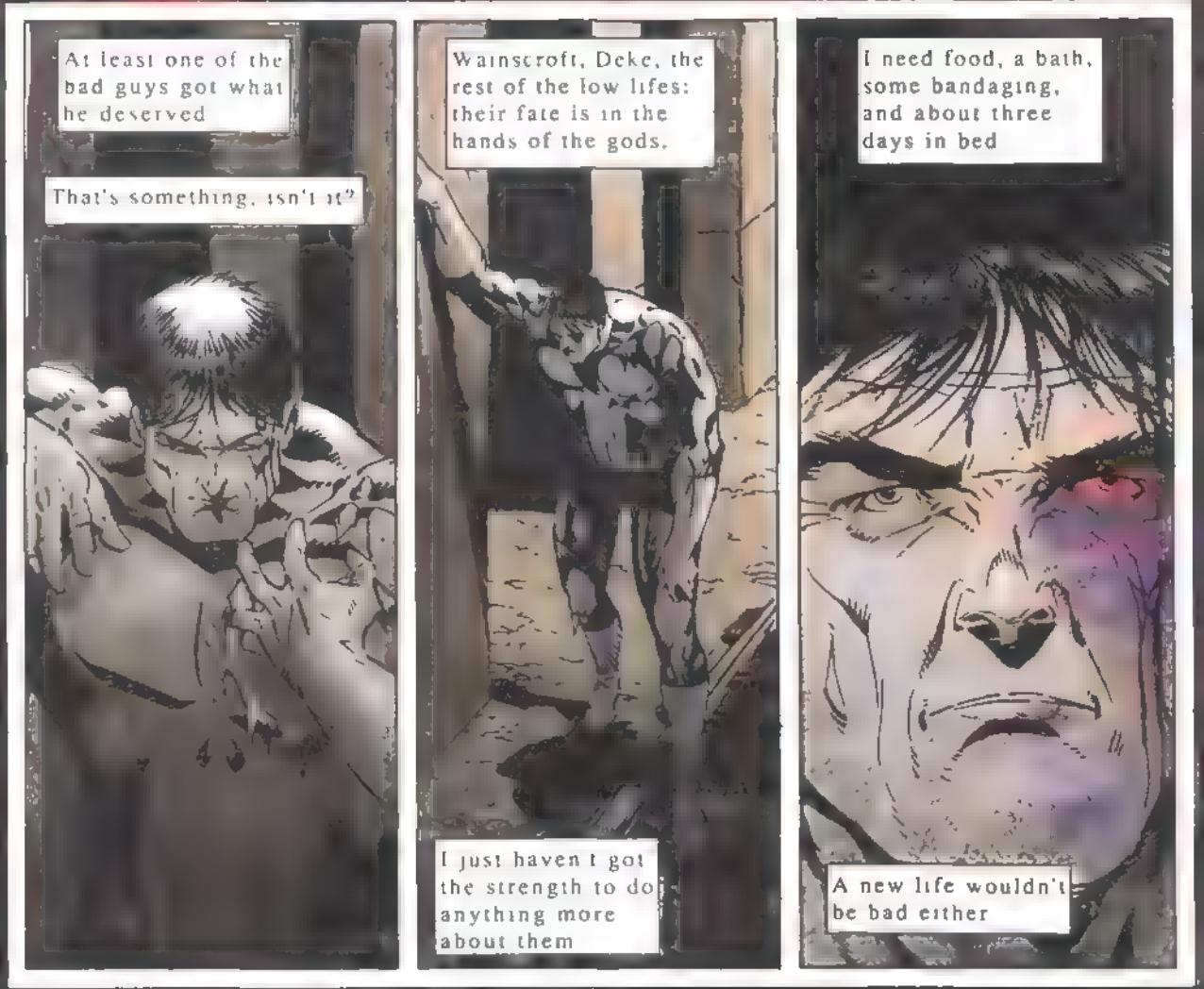
Regroup and restock my arsenel
Thats the ticket

But i gotta excape First!

A subway trak!
I made it!
I MADE IT!
The war will go on!
Chester Gouda!
has servived!
I shall return greater
than ever! UNSTOPABLE!
I w!
It can't be


IT JLST CAN'T BE!
NO !!

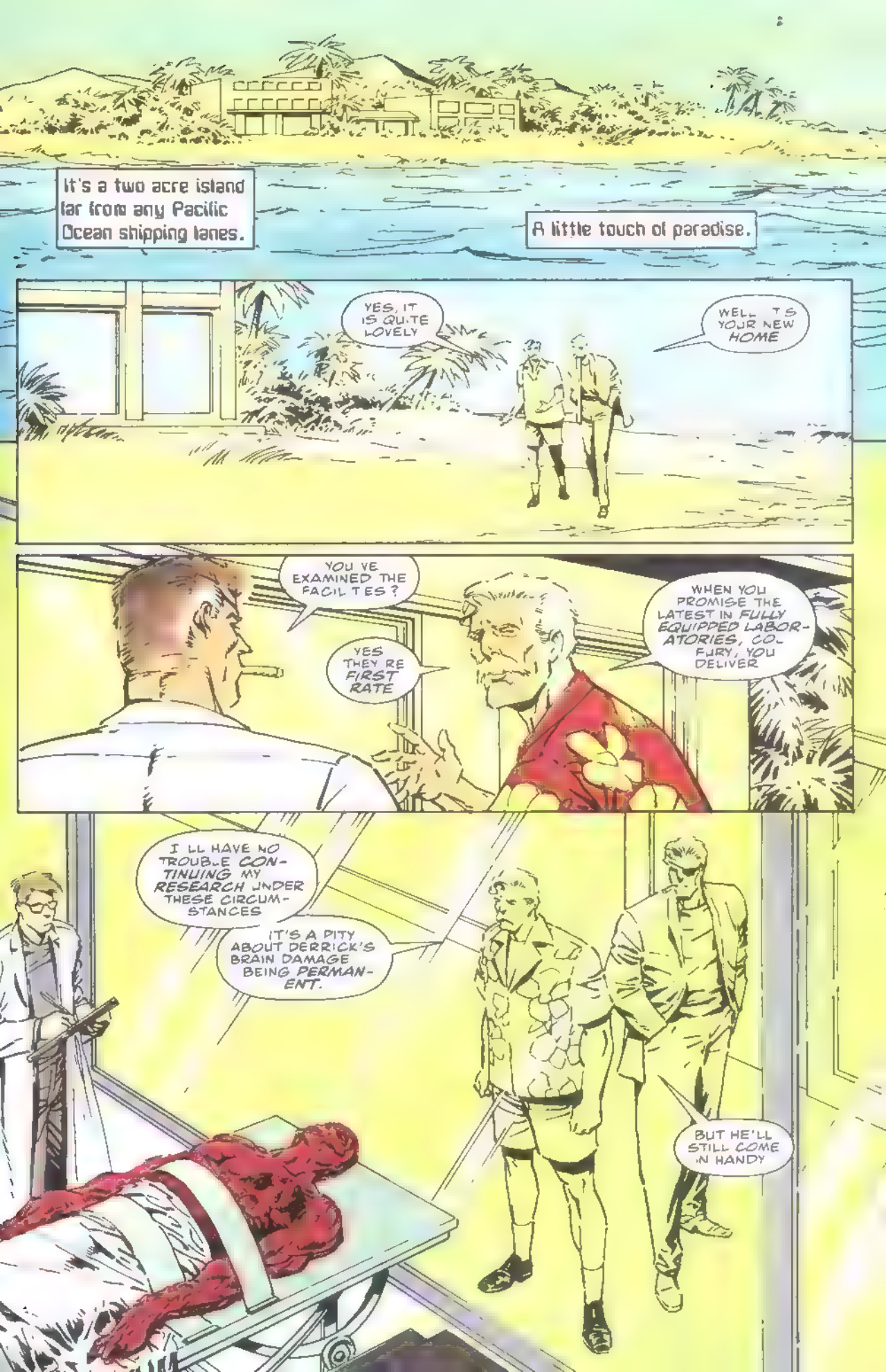


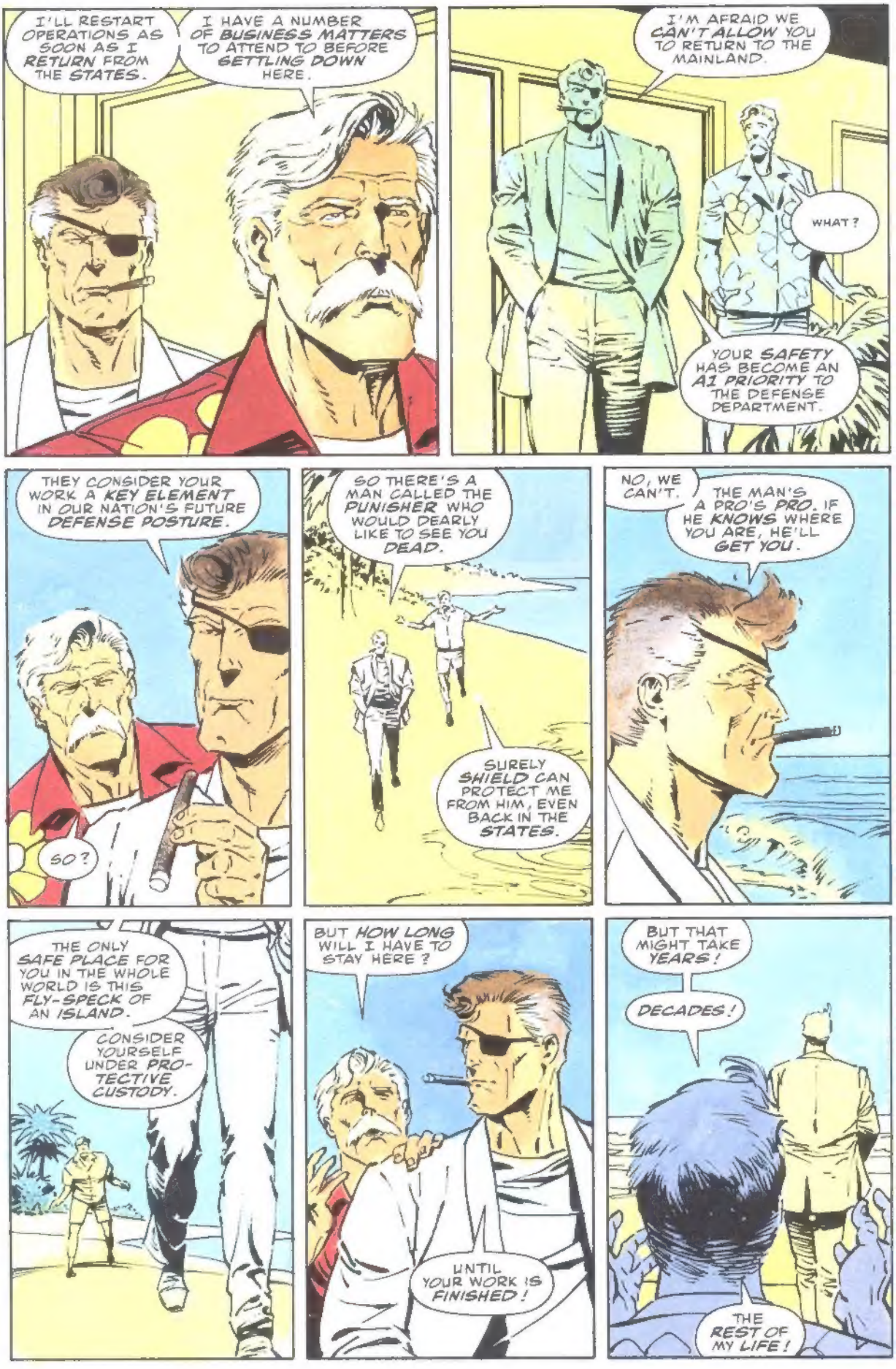

At least one of the bad guys got what he deserved
That's something, isn't it?
Wainscroft, Deke, the rest of the low lifes: their fate is in the hands of the gods.
I just haven't got the strength to do anything more about them
I need food, a bath, some bandaging, and about three days in bed
A new life wouldn't be bad either

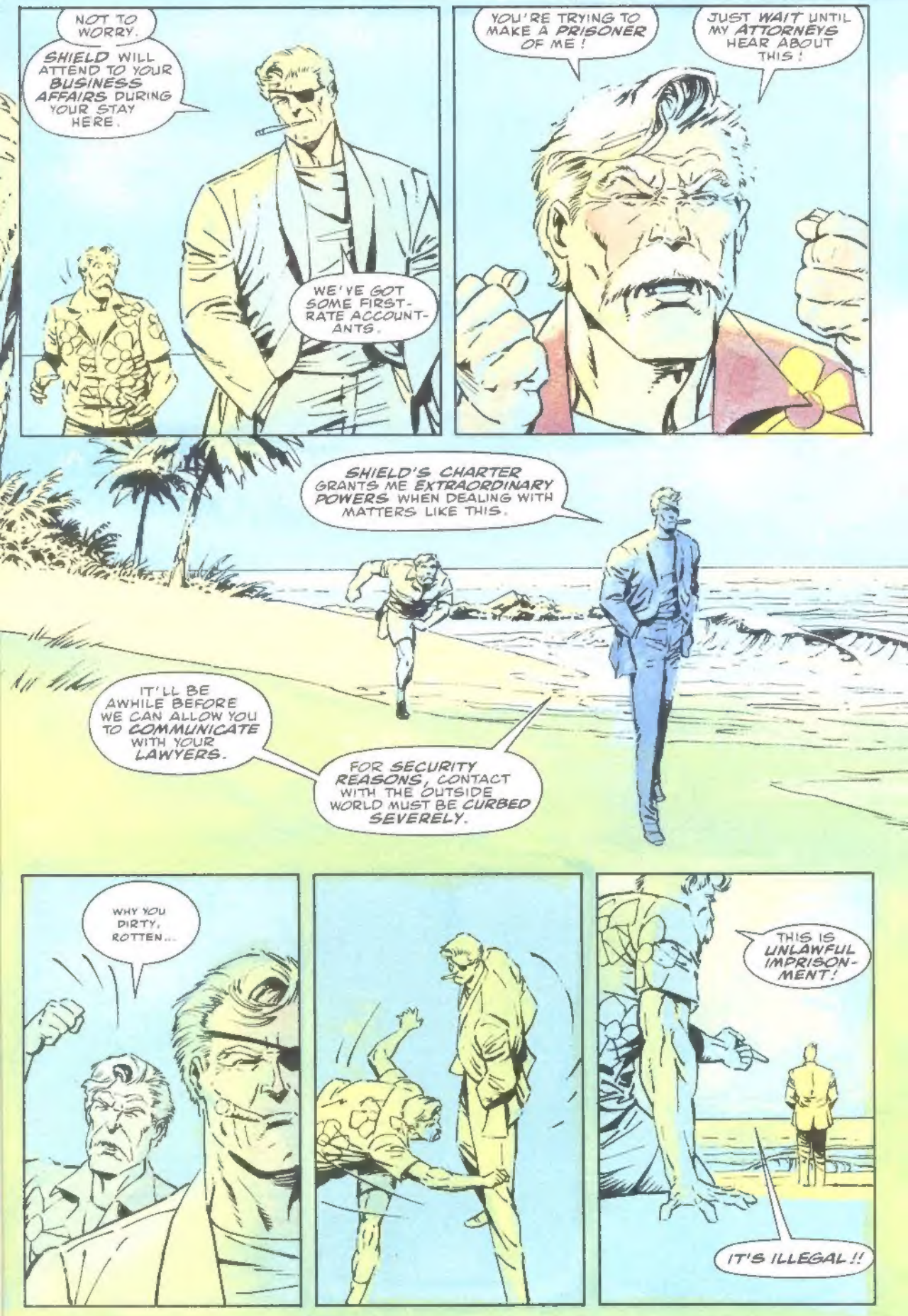
LORD, AND I THOUGHT YOU LOOKED BAD BEFORE
I'LL LIVE
YOU SMELL THREE DAYS DEAD.
YOU STOP NOTICING IT AFTER A WHILE
I'LL BET
TAKE ME HOME CHIP
YOU GOT IT
PUNISHER. CALLING THE PUNISHER
HUH?
SAME GUY'S BEEN CALLING ON OUR OPERATIONAL FREQUENCY EVERY FIFTEEN MINUTES.
HAVEN'T ANSWERED IT
DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE VOICE, HUH?
WHAT DO YOU WANT, FISK?
JUST SEEING TO A RATHER UNPLEASANT FORMALITY, MR CASTLE
I AM CALLING TO INFORM YOU THAT OUR TEMPORARY ALLIANCE HAS COME TO AN END.
CALLING TO GLOAT?

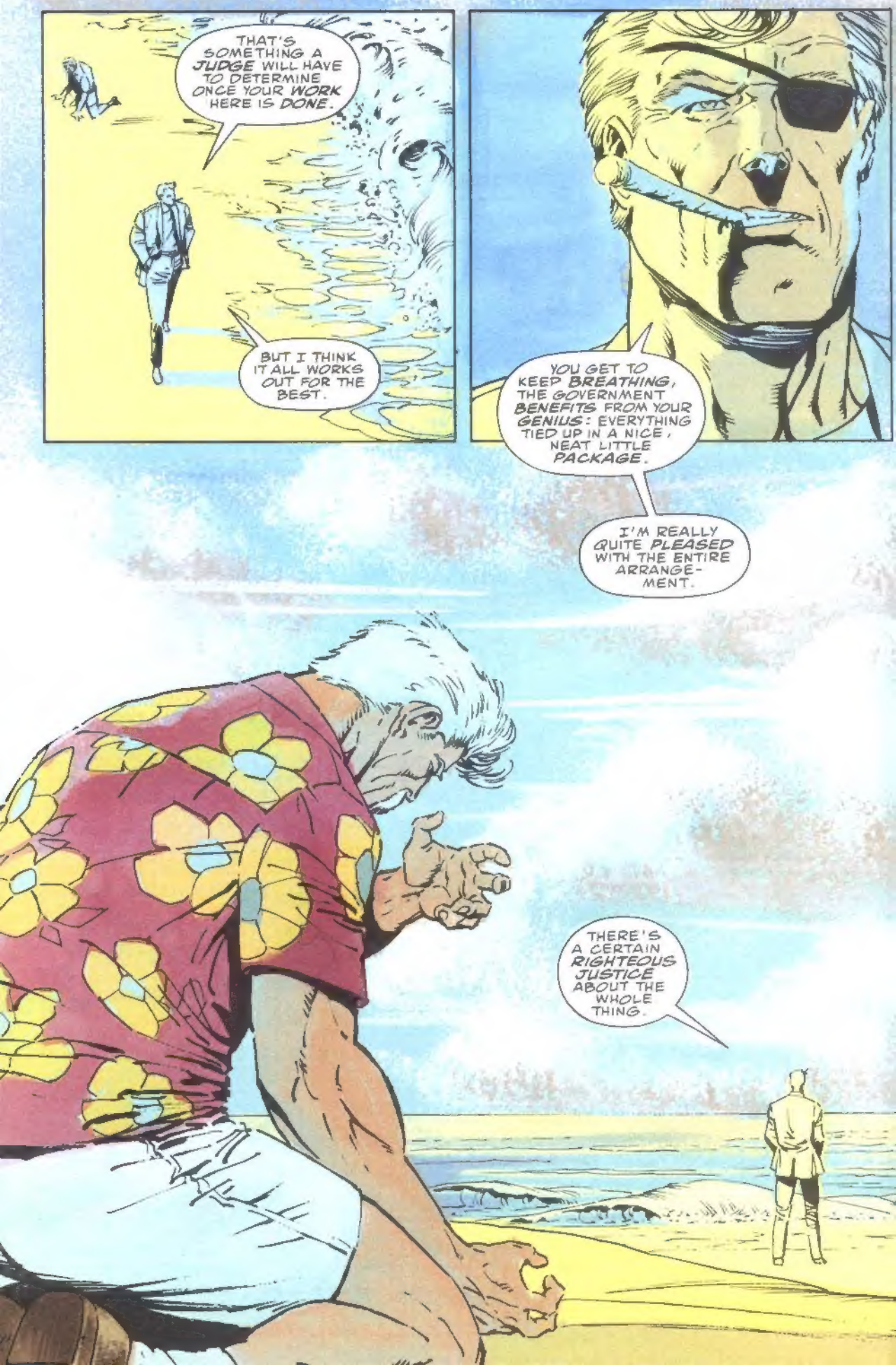
NO, THIS VENTURE WAS NOT ANYWHERE NEAR AS PROFITABLE AS I'D HOPED
YEAH, LOST THE REWARD FOR DEKE AND A BUNCH OF YOUR GOONS.
THEY WILL BE EASILY REPLACED
EVEN THE CHIEF?
IN THIS WORLD, EVERYONE IS EXPENDABLE
A TRUE SPORTSMAN.
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO CHALK THIS ONE UP AS A LOSS, FISK
BUT IN THAT RESPECT, I AM NOT ALONE, AM I?
I DON'T KNOW MANAGED TO GET DEKE AND A FAT PSYCHO OFF THE STREETS
BUT DAEMIAN WAINSCROFT HAS ESCAPED YOUR RIGHTEOUS WRATH, HASN'T HE?
I UNDERSTAND NICK FURY IS SETTING HIM UP IN SOME TROPICAL HIDEAWAY.
YOU'D GIVE YOUR SOUL TO KNOW WHERE HE'S HIDING, WOULDN'T YOU?
KINGPIN

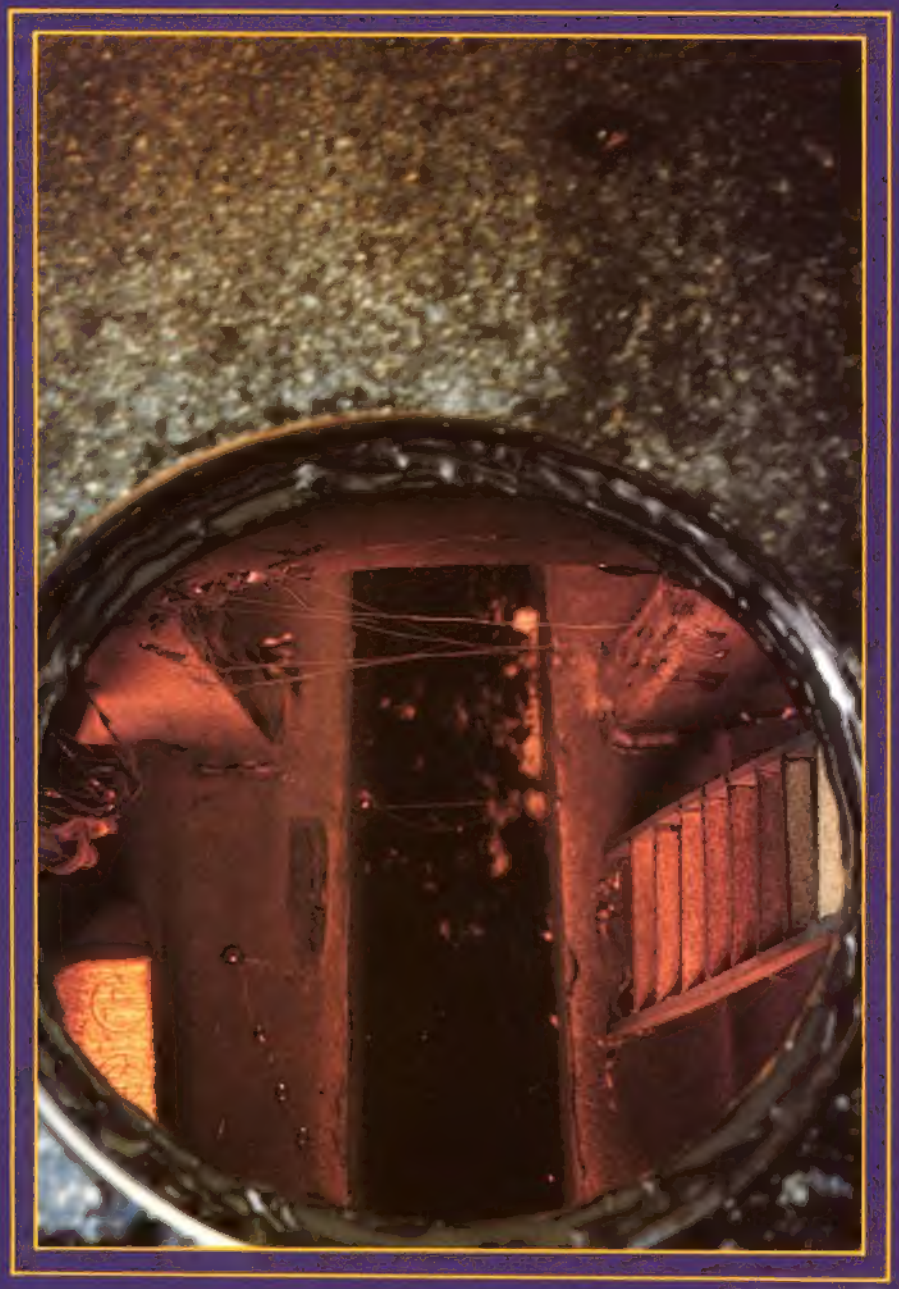
I LOOK FORWARD TO THE ENCOUNTER
. BE SEEING YOU
HE S RIGHT
WAINSCROFT D DN T PULL ANY TRIGGERS OR ACTUALLY DO THE KILLINGS, BUT THE MAN S GETT NG AWAY WITH MURDER
AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT
WHERE'S THE JUSTICE ?
Where s the justice?


It's a two acre island far from any Pacific Ocean shipping lanes.
A little touch of paradise.
YES, IT IS QUITE LOVELY
WELL IT'S YOUR NEW HOME
YOU'VE EXAMINED THE FACILITIES?
YES THEY'RE FIRST RATE
WHEN YOU PROMISE THE LATEST IN FULLY EQUIPPED LABORATORIES, COLONEL FURY, YOU DELIVER
I'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE CONTINUING MY RESEARCH UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES
IT'S A PITY ABOUT DERRICK'S BRAIN DAMAGE BEING PERMANENT.
BUT HE'LL STILL COME IN HANDY


I'LL RESTART OPERATIONS AS SOON AS I RETURN FROM THE STATES.
I HAVE A NUMBER OF BUSINESS MATTERS TO ATTEND TO BEFORE SETTLING DOWN HERE.
I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO RETURN TO THE MAINLAND.
WHAT?
YOUR SAFETY HAS BECOME AN A1 PRIORITY TO THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.
THEY CONSIDER YOUR WORK A KEY ELEMENT IN OUR NATION'S FUTURE DEFENSE POSTURE.
SO?
SO THERE'S A MAN CALLED THE PUNISHER WHO WOULD DEARLY LIKE TO SEE YOU DEAD.
SURELY SHIELD CAN PROTECT ME FROM HIM, EVEN BACK IN THE STATES.
NO, WE CAN'T.
THE MAN'S A PRO'S PRO. IF HE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE, HE'LL GET YOU.
THE ONLY SAFE PLACE FOR YOU IN THE WHOLE WORLD IS THIS FLY-SPECK OF AN ISLAND.
CONSIDER YOURSELF UNDER PROTECTIVE CUSTODY.
BUT HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO STAY HERE?
UNTIL YOUR WORK IS FINISHED!
BUT THAT MIGHT TAKE YEARS!
DECADES!
THE REST OF MY LIFE!


NOT TO WORRY.
SHIELD WILL ATTEND TO YOUR BUSINESS AFFAIRS DURING YOUR STAY HERE.
WE'VE GOT SOME FIRST-RATE ACCOUNTANTS.
YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE A PRISONER OF ME!
JUST WAIT UNTIL MY ATTORNEYS HEAR ABOUT THIS!
SHIELD'S CHARTER GRANTS ME EXTRAORDINARY POWERS WHEN DEALING WITH MATTERS LIKE THIS.
IT'LL BE AWHILE BEFORE WE CAN ALLOW YOU TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR LAWYERS.
FOR SECURITY REASONS, CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD MUST BE CURBED SEVERELY.
WHY YOU DIRTY, ROTTEN...
THIS IS UNLAWFUL IMPRISONMENT!
IT'S ILLEGAL!!


THAT'S SOMETHING A JUDGE WILL HAVE TO DETERMINE ONCE YOUR WORK HERE IS DONE.
BUT I THINK IT ALL WORKS OUT FOR THE BEST.
YOU GET TO KEEP BREATHING, THE GOVERNMENT BENEFITS FROM YOUR GENIUS: EVERYTHING TIED UP IN A NICE, NEAT LITTLE PACKAGE.
I'M REALLY QUITE PLEASED WITH THE ENTIRE ARRANGE-MENT.
THERE'S A CERTAIN RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE ABOUT THE WHOLE THING.



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